



CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

NEWS RELEASE

Department of Toxic Substances Control

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Settlement Reached With Countis Laboratories

SACRAMENTO --- The California Environmental Protection Agency's Department of Toxic Substances Control today announced that it has reached a settlement with Countis Laboratories, at 12295 Charles Drive in Grass Valley. Under the terms of the settlement, Countis will pay \$30,000 of which \$5,000 is a penalty and \$25,000 is for reimbursement of the DTSC's costs.

The settlement requires Countis Laboratories to determine whether wastes generated at the facility are hazardous and manage them in accordance with applicable regulations and statutes. The settlement also stipulates the Countis Laboratories submit a tiered permit notification, label all tanks and containers of hazardous waste, transfer hazardous waste into containers in good condition, keep all containers of hazardous waste closed and stored in a manner which prevents the containers from leaking.

The settlement stems from a DTSC January 2000 Enforcement Order that cites the lab in violation of a series of the state's hazardous waste management laws. The violations involved were a vanadium-bearing sludge, a waste oil/water mixture and used trichloroethane.

During a series of inspections (April 4, 1995, May 23, 1996, and July 30, 1996), DTSC inspectors cited the facility for the following violations:

- failure to determine if a waste stored at the facility was hazardous,
- treatment and storage of hazardous waste without a facility permit or authorization from DTSC,
- accumulation of hazardous waste without proper labeling and identifying the waste, and its properties,
- failure to transfer hazardous waste from a leaking container to a container that was in good condition, and
- failure to maintain containers of hazardous waste closed during storage.

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In addition, the facility was cited for storing the vanadium-bearing sludge in gunnysacks inside inverted trash can lids on April 4, 1995, and inside metal catch pans on May 23, 1996, and July 30, 1996. The facility also signed and submitted a compliance certification on June 12, 1996; however, the DTSC inspection on July 30, 1996 revealed the same two violations.

The Department will credit Countis Laboratories the \$5,000 penalty if the responsible person for hazardous waste management at the facility attends and successfully completes the first four modules of the California Compliance School within one year. Failure to do so will require that Countis Laboratories pay the \$5,000 penalty.

DTSC is one of six Boards and Departments within the California Environmental Protection Agency. DTSC's mission is to protect and enhance public health and the environment by regulating the management of hazardous waste and promoting its reduction.

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"The energy challenge facing California is real. Every Californian needs to take immediate action to reduce energy consumption. For a list of simple ways you can reduce demand and cut your energy costs, see our Web-site at www.dtsc.ca.gov."